364 For the Mossi, as for all other men, life ends in death, with or without illness. The Blacks do not know how to prevent diseases, and they know very little about fighting them. Hygiene is almost unknown. The huts are poorly aired, the chickens and in general all the animals in the inner courtyard walk everywhere and foul everything. The courtyard is swept often, but the hut of the sheep and goats is located in the midst of the other dwellings; the horse is kept within the soukala [514] itself; and people relieve themselves anywhere, wherever they find a convenient spot. The manure is gathered in a heap, but it is kept next to the huts and gives off a nauseating smell and noxious miasmas, especially at the beginning of the rainy season.

515 The Mossi are not dirty, but they cannot be called clean. Those who dwell in villages abundantly supplied with water at all times are the cleanest. The women, who fetch water every day and thus have an opportunity to wash, are usually cleaner than the men. A Mossi never passes a pond without drinking copiously and washing all over, and this would seem to prove that those who go dirty do so unwillingly; they have no water nearby, and it would be too much trouble to go to the river to bathe. Clothing, especially breechcloths, is often repulsively dirty. This is because washing wears out clothes, and who knows when new ones will be available? No wonder disease has such a hold on this people.

855 165 Child care is quite rudimentary: a few baths; enemas two or three times a day, without which it is said their bowels would not move; and that is all. At the slightest indisposition the sorcerer is consulted, or else the child is left to himself; he will get well or die, and nothing is done about it. As a consequence, child mortality is very high.

758 Those who fall prey to a contagious disease are not isolated. A healthy child lies on the same mat as one with smallpox, a leper drinks from the common gourd unless his lips are covered with sores. People do, however, hesitate to sit where a syphilitic person with sores previously sat. The education of the Mossi in matters of hygiene is wholly yet to be learned.

576 On meeting someone, Mossi politeness requires that an inquiry be made about his health and that of all his relatives. The response invariably is "So-and-So is well," and the other in turn responds, "May God permit his health to wax." It is only after a little conversation that a certain person is said to be ill or to be getting better.

195 It is not said that someone died, but that he ran short of strength, that he passed away, that he left us.

751 it. It is recognized that smallpox does not hit the same place twice (obviously, when it has already killed all those who could be killed), and fear of catching the disease prevents many natives from undergoing the operation. The Administration is rendering great services
744 with its vaccination tours, which will be all the more successful since the experiments carried out by our Fathers some years ago, with tubes of vaccine kindly sent by the Administrator of Ouagadougou, bore excellent results and checked an epidemic which was decimating the
757 population. Smallpox victims are nursed /67/ as carefully as possible. They are laid on a bed of sand which retains heat. When the pocks are ripe, they are punctured with a thorn, and then the patient is rubbed with sand. The eyes are washed with an antiseptic decoction, and the patient gargles frequently with peppered water.

Medicinal herbs, tree leaves, and barks are the basis of all remedies, in the form of infusions or poultices. The study of these medicines would no doubt be of interest to a specialist. But would the natives who hold the secret of their preparation be willing to surrender it?

[572] When a friend is ill, even if he lives far away, the right thing is to
755 visit him, offer him sympathy, and even more appropriately bring him some gifts. The relatives of the sick person consult the sorcerer, for it is necessary to determine the agency that caused the disease. Sorcerers rarely prescribe a medicine. Their role is to point out the part of the body which is afflicted and especially to indicate the spirit who should receive the sacrifice. Another man, who in most cases has nothing to do with witchcraft, knows the medicines. If the patient improves after the prescribed sacrifices have been offered, it means that the sorcerer knows his business well; if not, it means that he has cheated.

● 758 Every self-respecting sorcerer must prescribe a negative treatment, in the sense of pointing out certain things the patient must not eat. Sometimes goat or chicken flesh is forbidden for the duration of the illness or permanently. Sometimes it is a certain kind of sauce, or millet or bean fritters. On the other hand, since the Mossi eat no eggs, especially not raw, and drink hardly any milk, they sustain the sick with plenty of millet beer and with an unappetizing mush of coarsely ground millet, often mixed with powdered charcoal. Patients have difficulty absorbing such a mixture and occasionally die of
755 starvation. Sometimes the sorcerer also indicates an amulet that

784 262 born among the Peul, to whom dog flesh is forbidden, may have the dog as kisgou. Sometimes the kisgou concerns only him, his son, and grandson and not his other descendants, because the son and grandson will follow his own soul, while the soul of the other descendants will follow that of his mother, their great-grandmother, to whom dog flesh is not forbidden. A sorcerer's reasoning against which there is no argument!

/89/ This kind of kisgou is the more binding of the two, but it may be terminated if the person who established it offers the proper sacrifices, or if one of his descendants, of his own will, releases himself and his children from it. Thus the family of the Saman'Naba, Prime Minister of Koupéla, has the hare as kisgou. When the naba saw his Christian brothers and son eat hare flesh with impunity, without becoming blind or leprous, he took to eating it himself without ill effects.

784 869 753 Parents teach their children about the various family kisgou and instill the proper awe into them so they will not eat these animals. Involuntary disregard of one's kisgou may lead to illness, and the sorcerer consulted indicates what has to be done and what sacrifice must be offered to the tangandé to obtain his forgiveness. If the slip was deliberate, if it showed contempt, no forgiveness is possible.

784 758 262 The second kind of kisgou is quite special and personal. It consists of the various prohibitions imposed by the sorcerers on a sick person. A certain kind of meat or sauce is forbidden to the patient, or he may not drink water containing millet flour, or he may not eat millet or bean cakes. This is how a poor rachitic child with a heart disease was successively forbidden practically every kind of food. His relatives had the greatest difficulty finding those foods that were not forbidden to him, and eventually he died of starvation. All such kisgou terminate of course with the illness that caused them, unless the disease is incurable and lasts to the end of the patient's life.

Chapter 2. The Cult

000 If we define religion with Mgr. Le Roy (1) as "The body of beliefs,

1. Mgr. Le Roy, op. cit., p. 49.